



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



Public Hearing – March 6, 2009
Transportation Committee

Testimony Submitted by Commissioner Gina McCarthy
Department of Environmental Protection

Raised House Bill No. 6618, AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AUXILIARY POWER UNIT WEIGHT TOLERANCE EXEMPTION

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Raised House Bill 6618 - AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN AUXILIARY POWER UNIT WEIGHT TOLERANCE EXEMPTION. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) supports this bill because it would pave the way for reducing air pollution from idling diesel trucks in Connecticut.

Auxiliary power units (APUs) are small engines that provide cooling, heating and electrical power as an alternative to the idling of a large diesel engine. A significant barrier to reducing idling is that the weight of the APUs (approximately three to five hundred pounds each) count toward the regulatory weight limits for motor carriers in Connecticut. This bill would remove that barrier and offer an exemption based on the weight of the APU.

Reducing diesel idling is good for public health. On-road diesel emissions contribute towards many air quality and respiratory problems. These emissions form ozone (aka smog) and fine particulate matter, pollutants that are known to cause lung damage. Idling diesel trucks also emit greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Emission reductions from diesel trucks will help Connecticut meet federal health-based air quality standards for ozone and fine particulate matter. These same reductions will also help us meet the targets set forth in the Public Act 08-98, the Connecticut Global Warming Solutions Act.

Reducing diesel idling may also be good for Connecticut's economy. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides funding to states for projects that reduce diesel emissions and create jobs. Passage of House Bill 6618 aligns favorably with the availability of these federal stimulus funds that could help fleet owners and independent operators to meet the costs of installing APUs and could create Connecticut jobs in the sales, installation and servicing of the units. Grant and loan programs to purchase and install APUs and other idle reduction technologies are specifically covered under the stimulus program. This bill would allow operators to take advantage of a grant or loan program with minimal up-front cost.

Reducing diesel idling is good for business and good for the environment. Based on an EPA case study, a typical idling truck burns nearly a gallon of fuel per hour. Installing APUs on approximately 100 long-haul trucks, each idling for 2,400 hours per year, would save up to

144,000 gallons of diesel fuel each year, and annually eliminate 36 tons of NO_x, 0.8 tons of particulate matter, and 1,598 tons of carbon dioxide. Short haul trucks, while only idling about 550 hours per year, still waste 330 gallons of fuel apiece each year and make significant contributions to air pollution, most of which stays in Connecticut. Conserving fuel that would otherwise be idled away represents an opportunity to reduce our dependence on foreign oil. This bill will also make it easier for diesel truck owners and operators to comply with the state's three-minute idle limitation regulation and reduce multiple pollutant emissions.

The DEP urges the passage of House Bill 6618. It would facilitate the implementation of DEP strategies to reduce air pollution from diesel trucks. And it would provide additional opportunities for the Connecticut to take advantage of federal stimulus funds to create jobs and reduce diesel pollution in our state. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on this proposal. If you should require any additional information, please contact Robert La France, DEP Legislative Liaison at 424-3401.